



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Economic Development Commission

MEETING MINUTES

January 10, 2012 | 7:30 p.m.

Commissioners: Daphne Collins (Chair), Chris Steele (Vice Chair), Jack Leader (Secretary), Barry Abramson, Chuck Eisenberg, Jane Ives, Peter Lew, Ron Lipof, John Pears, Philip Plottel, Darryl Settles

Staff: Amanda Stout

Guests: Ald. Jay Harney, Ald. David Kalis, Ald. Amy Sangiolo, Bill Renke, John Sisson

Absent: David Abromowitz, Robert Gifford

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Candace Havens
Director
Planning & Development

Amanda Stout
Senior Economic
Development Planner

Commissioners

Daphne Collins, Chair
Christopher Steele,
Vice Chair
Jack Leader, Secretary

Barry Abramson
David Abromowitz
Charles Eisenberg
Robert Gifford
Jane Ives
Peter Kai Jung Lew
Ronald Lipof
Joyce Moss
John R.A. Pears
Philip Plottel
Darryl Settles

1. EDC Business

- **Motion to approve the December 13th EDC Meeting Minutes. Motion approved (7-0, Steele seconded by Abramson).** Eisenberg, Lew, Plottel, and Settles arrived after vote.

2. EDC 2011 Annual Report

- Collins circulated hard copies of the Draft EDC 2011 Annual Report. The Draft Report will be sent electronically to commissioners and comments are requested by Friday, January 20th.

3. Small Business Incubator Initiative

- Lipof reported that EDC members will be kicking-off the project with a presentation to Suffolk University Law and Business School students on Wednesday, February 15th at Suffolk. The students will work on the project from February through April and will deliver a detailed business plan at the conclusion of the practicum.
- Any commissioners interested in giving input on the kick-off presentation will meet on Thursday, January 19th.

4. Subcommittee on Existing Business Support

- As part of their ongoing discussions with local business owners, Collins and Steele met with the owners of Green Planet Kids; additional meetings are planned.
- Collins noted that recognition is important and there is interest in creating an awards ceremony for businesses.
- Collins is working to schedule a kick-off meeting with the Board of Aldermen in March.

5. Subcommittee on Business Attraction

- Steele reported that the subcommittee has been meeting with builders and developers and will soon report back on their findings.

6. Old Business

- **Riverside** - The EDC Letter regarding development at Riverside was sent to Mayor Warren and the Board of Aldermen on December 16, 2011. The zoning at the Riverside site is currently being discussed by the Board's Zoning and Planning Committee. Collins and Steele volunteered to cover the ZAP Riverside meetings on

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behalf of the EDC. The Commission engaged in further discussion about development at the Riverside site.

- **Newton Centre** - Stout reported that the Firefighters' Triangle area and the future of Fire Station #3 are currently under discussion by the City's Design Review Commission. EDC members asked about the criteria that the DRC is using to evaluate the area and wondered whether one option under discussion is tearing down the existing station and rebuilding it at a smaller footprint. Stout said the Planning Department would keep the EDC apprised of future DRC meetings.
- **EDSAT** - Stout reported that the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) is moving forward and she would report back when the Dukakis Center at Northeastern University had prepared their report.
- Leader asked the Planning Department for an update on Kessler Woods, a project about which the EDC had written a letter several years ago. He asked whether the affordable housing component of the project had yet been built.

7. New Business

- Eisenberg raised the issue of the prevalence of banks in village centers. He noted that the EDC had previously indicated to Ald. Vicki Danberg their support of furthering a docket item that might prohibit banks and financial services offices from locating on the first floors in village centers without a special permit. This docket item has not yet been discussed before the Zoning and Planning Committee, and the EDC has not yet committed to supporting any policy. Eisenberg noted that banks continue to locate in village centers, often with long leases, and that there is growing concern among residents about the issue. Eisenberg suggested, and other commissioners agreed, that the EDC suggest a policy that might put in place a temporary moratorium on new banks going in by-right.
- ***Motion directing Eisenberg to draft a letter regarding a proposed moratorium on banks to be presented for discussion at the February EDC meeting. Motion approved (11-0, Steele seconded by Abramson)***
- Steele suggested the formation of a new subcommittee with the purpose of studying large development parcels in the City. Leader noted that the City once had a map of these parcels, possibly created as part of the Newton Comprehensive Plan. This EDC effort might expand on or revise such a map. Further discussion at future meetings.

8. EDC Business

- At the February meeting, the EDC will hold Nominations and Elections for the positions of President, Vice President, and Secretary for 2012.
- Due to scheduling conflicts, the EDC agreed to reschedule the next meeting from Tuesday, February 14th and to instead hold the meeting on Thursday, February 16th. The Agenda will include the 2011 Annual Report, the letter to be drafted by Eisenberg regarding banks, Nominations, and Elections.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Stout, AICP, Sr. Economic Development Planner